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# THE BUILDING OF ST. LOUIS

FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW  
BY NOTABLE PERSONS

Compilation and Comment  
by  
WALTER B. STEVENS

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SAINT LOUIS







# INTRODUCTORY

**O**N a December day of 1763, Pierre Laclede rode to the summit of a gentle hill and looked eastward through the tree tops below to the Mississippi. He turned to Auguste Chouteau, who was beside him, and said: "He was delighted with the situation. He did not hesitate a moment to form there the establishment which he proposed. Besides the beauty of the site, he found there all the advantages that one could desire to found a settlement which might become considerable hereafter."

The hill from which the founder viewed the site of St. Louis was where the court-house stands today. It became to two generations a landmark. In the town talk of that early period it was referred to as "The Hill." Auguste Chouteau was a boy of thirteen years and four months. He was wise for his age. He remembered to write in his journal, with firm, careful hand, a narrative of this finding of the site for the settlement.

Laclede and the stepson had left the flotilla and the rest of their party in winter quarters at Fort Chartres, forty miles down the river. They had crossed to the Missouri side and had explored thoroughly the country to the bluffs overlooking the Missouri river near its mouth. They had seen what Charlevoix had observed on his voyage forty years before and had described:

"I believe this is the finest confluence in the world. The two rivers are much of the same breadth, each about half a league, but the Missouri is by far the most rapid, and seems to enter the Mississippi like a conqueror, through which it carries its white waves to the opposite shore without mixing them. Afterward it gives its color to the Mississippi, which it never loses again, but carries quite down to the sea."

Laclede and Chouteau rode southward, leaving the precipitous cliffs of limestone from which they had viewed this union of the Missouri and Mississippi. Their route was over the rolling prairies, then almost devoid of forest growth. The question of the location of the settlement

was still unanswered. They ascended the hill from the west. Laclède announced the decision. From the elevation, after he had looked long and with increasing satisfaction, Laclède went down among the trees which covered the lower plateau. He made his way slowly to the edge of the limestone bluff thirty feet high, at the base of which was a strip of sand and then the Mississippi.

"After having examined all thoroughly," wrote Auguste Chouteau, in the journal, "he fixed upon the place where he wished to form his settlement, marked with his own hands some trees and said, 'you will come here as soon as navigation opens and will cause this place to be cleared in order to form our settlement after the plan I shall give you.'"

Where Laclède marked the trees in December, 1763, Auguste Chouteau cleared the ground and began to build the cabins in February following. On that spot stood the government house and the headquarters of the fur company while St. Louis was growing into permanence. There, on Main street between Walnut and Market streets, was for many years the Merchants Exchange. In that immediate vicinity the commerce of St. Louis focused for a century.

Laclède and his youthful confidant went back by the shortest route to Fort Chartres. No further search was suggested. Preparations to move were to be made without delay. Laclède announced the results of the exploration. "He said, with enthusiasm," Auguste Chouteau recorded, "to M. de Neyon and to his officers, that he had found a situation where he was going to form a settlement which might become, hereafter, one of the finest cities of America—so many advantages were embraced in this site, by its locality and its central position for forming settlements."

So reads the journal, written with painstaking accuracy, as the frequent erasures and interlineations bear witness.

Within five years after Laclède marked the trees, a fur trade of \$80,000 a year was the basis of the settlement's prosperity. Three years after the first steamboat crept up the Mississippi to the foot of Walnut street, in the twenties, the trade of the city had reached \$2,500,000 annually. When the rush to California came, in the forties, St. Louis again bounded forward in commercial and industrial development. The year 1907 made a new record. The trade of the city had reached a billion dollars.

As the city passed the milestones from 1764 to 1907, many observers of the building of St. Louis made record of their impressions in writing or in speech. They have described. They have commented. They have prophesied.

# St. Louis in Print for the First Time

St. Louis got into print for the first time in 1770. That year Captain Philip Pitman published in London a book on his observations along the Mississippi. He described St. Louis as he saw the settlement in 1767, when it was just three years old.

Pitman was an officer in the engineering corps of the British army. He was detailed by General Gage to visit the Mississippi Valley. The year before, 1765, Sterling and the Highlanders had reached Fort Chartres by way of the Alleghany mountains and the Ohio river. Sterling died a few months after he occupied Fort Chartres. The British government wanted an expert report on the territory just acquired from France on the east side of the Mississippi. Pitman was selected by Gage to make it. Gage was in command of the military forces of Great Britain in America. The middle of the next decade this same General Gage precipitated the American Revolution by sending the redcoats out of Boston to seize arms at Concord, bringing on the Battle of Lexington.

Pitman came out to the Mississippi Valley, "the country of the Illinois," it was then called, in 1766. He traveled about several months. He sent in his report to General Gage in 1767. Three years later he gave to the public a narrative of his observations and impressions. He noted the migration of the French settlers on the east side to St. Louis, but he does not give to Laclede's settlement the name the founder chose for it.

By "Paincourt" Pitman designates St. Louis. In one place he uses the proper name and that is where he incidentally explains how the settlement came by its nickname. In his description of Ste. Genevieve the army engineer says:

"The village of St. Louis is supplied with flour and other provisions from hence."

Laclede's settlement had grown faster than the farming in the common fields and the milling of the Taillons. It was being fed from the older and larger settlement of Ste. Genevieve. There was reason for "Pain Court" (Short Loaf).

St. Louis, as Pitman found it in the early months of 1767, is described in these words:

"This village is one league and a half above Kaoquias, on the west side of the Mississippi, being the present headquarters of the French in these parts. It was first established in the year 1764 by a company of merchants, to whom Mons. D'Abbadie had given an exclusive grant for the commerce with the Indian nations on the River Missouri; and for the security and encouragement of this settlement the staff of French officers and the commissary were ordered to remove here, upon the rendering Fort Chartres to the English; and great encouragement was given to the inhabitants to remove with them, most of whom did. The company has built a large house and stores here, and there are about forty-five houses and as many families. No fort or barracks are yet built. The French garrison consists of a captain-commandant, two lieutenants, a fort major, one sergeant, one corporal and twenty men."

## Early Habits of Dress

Monette, in his history of the Valley of the Mississippi, tells of the habit of dress which prevailed in St. Louis in colonial days. The leggings were of coarse linen in summer and of deerskin in winter. The principal garment in cold weather for the men was —

“Generally a coarse blanket capote drawn over the shirt and long vest. The capote served the double purpose of cloak and hat; for the hood, attached to the collar behind, hung upon the back and shoulders as a cape, and, when desired, it served to cover the whole head from intense cold. Most commonly in summer, and especially among the boatmen, voyageurs and coureurs des bois, the head was enveloped in a blue handkerchief, turban-like, as a protection from solar heat and noxious insects. The same material of lighter quality and fancy colors, wreathed with bright-colored ribbons, and sometimes flowers, formed the fancy headdress of the females on festive occasions; at other times they also used the handkerchief in the more patriarchal style. The dress of the matrons was simple and plain; the old-fashioned short jacket and petticoat, varied to suit the diversities of taste, was the most common overdress of the women. The feet in winter were protected by Indian moccasins, or the more unwieldy clog-shoe, but in summer, and in dry weather the foot was left uncovered and free, except on festive occasions and holidays, when it was adorned with the light moccasin, gorgeously ornamented with brilliants of porcupine quills, shells, beads or lace, ingeniously wrought over the front instead of buckles, and on the side flaps.”

## St. Louisans as The American Captain Saw Them

"The American captain" Amos Stoddard was called. He came out to St. Louis to raise the American flag in 1804. He remained here some time as the representative of the United States government. A New Englander, he studied the people of St. Louis and wrote his "Notes." In the opinion of the American captain the people of St. Louis were temperate.

"They mostly limit their desires to vegetables, soups and coffee. They are great smokers of tobacco, and no doubt this gives a yellow tinge to their skins. Ardent spirits are seldom used except by the most laborious classes of society. They even dislike white wines because they possess too much spirit. Clarets and other light red wines are common among them; and those who can afford it are not sparing of this beverage. Great economy is displayed in their family meals. This is not the effect of a parsimonious disposition, nor always of the want of adequate means. It results from a conviction of what their constitutions require. They readily sacrifice what may be termed luxury for the preservation of health, and it is seldom they contract diseases from intemperate excesses. Naturally volatile in their dispositions they sometimes precipitate themselves from one extreme to another. Hence it is that in making entertainment for their friends, especially for strangers of distinction, they study to render them sumptuous. Their tables are covered with a great variety of dishes; almost every sort of food, dressed in all manner of ways, is exhibited in profusion. The master of the house, out of respect for his guests, frequently waits on them himself. On such occasions no trouble or expense is spared in procuring the best wines and other liquors the country affords. Their desserts are no less plentiful and there is no want of delicacy in their quality or variety. Many of these entertainments cost from \$250 to \$400."

The American captain did not find St. Louis the "land of steady habits" he had known in his youth. He did, however, discover in the habitants a distinctive character which in his judgment was admirable.

“Perhaps the levities displayed and the amusements pursued on Sunday may be considered by some to border on licentiousness. They attend mass in the morning with great devotion, but after the exercises of the church are over they usually collect in parties and pass away their time in social and merry intercourse. They play at billiards and other games, and to balls and assemblies the Sundays are particularly devoted. To those educated in regular and pious protestant habits such parties and amusements appear unseasonable, strange and odious, if not prophetic of some signal curse on the workers of iniquity. It must, however, be confessed that the French people, in these days, avoid all intemperate and immoral excesses, and conduct themselves with apparent decorum. They are of opinion that there is true and undefiled religion in their amusements, much more, indeed, than they can see in certain night conferences and obscure meetings in various parts among the tombs. When questioned relative to their gaiety on Sundays, they will answer that men were made for happiness, and that the more they are able to enjoy themselves the more acceptable they are to their creator. They are of opinion that a sullen countenance, attention to gloomy subjects, a set form of speech, and a stiff behavior are more indicative of hypocrisy than of religion; and they say they have often remarked that those who practised these singularities on Sunday will most assuredly cheat and defraud their neighbors during the remainder of the week. Such are the religious sentiments of a people void of superstition; of a people prone to hospitality, urbanity of manners and innocent recreation, and who present their daily orisons at the throne of Grace with as much confidence of success as the most devout Puritan in Christendom.”



## Beauty, Modesty and Manners of St. Louis Women

Christian Schultz wrote "Travels on an Inland Voyage, Performed in the Years 1807 and 1808, Including a Tour of Nearly 6,000 Miles." He explained in the preface to his two volumes that he was prompted to this journey of discovery by alleged "Travels in America, by Thomas Ash, Esq., England." Schultz found that book had "mistakes, misrepresentations and fictions on almost every page." When he had concluded his own travels he expressed the opinion that Thomas Ash did not exist, and that his so-called Travels in America were mythical. Schultz reached St. Louis on the 22nd of November, 1807. He came by land from St. Genevieve, taking the road on the Illinois side of the river, by way of Prairie du Rocher. He says that before arriving opposite St. Louis he rode "fifteen miles over one of the richest and most beautiful tracts I have ever seen. It is called the American bottom, and is a prairie of such extent as to weary the eye in tracing its boundaries." Schultz crossed the Mississippi at the Cahokia ferry and rode three miles to "the metropolis of Louisiana." He gives his impressions with evident intention to be accurate. It is to be borne in mind that the time of this visit was only three years after the American flag had been raised. Subsequent to this period, the fur trade was reorganized, extended to the westward and northward and greatly expanded.

"St Louis is beautifully situated on an elevated bank on the west side of the river. It contains about two hundred houses, which, from the whiteness of a considerable number of them, as they are rough-cast and whitewashed, appear to great advantage as you approach the town. It is likewise a French settlement, established in the year 1764; the inhabitants are chiefly Roman Catholics, and have a chapel and a confessor. A small number of American families have of late years settled in this town, and have had so much influence as to give a decided American tone to the fashions of the place; but as their numbers are too few to erect a church of their own, they have, by way of amusement, made arrangement with the father confessor,

to give them a little lecture in his chapel every Sunday evening.

"I observe two or three big houses in the town, which are said to have cost from twenty to sixty thousand dollars, but they have nothing either of beauty or taste in their appearance to recommend them, being simply big, heavy, and unsightly structures. In this country, however, where fashion and taste differ so materially from fashion and taste with us, they are considered as something not only grand, but even elegant.

"St. Louis has for many years past been the center of the fur trade in this country; but this branch of business, I am informed, is now rapidly declining, in consequence of the game becoming scarce.

"This town has been strongly fortified by the Spanish government, having two forts, two blockhouses, four stone towers, and one half moon. These encircle the whole town on the land side, and are within gunshot of each other. Some little care is still taken of the forts and barracks occupied by the garrison which is stationed at this place, but the towers and blockhouses are entirely neglected, and, for want of repairs, already tumbling to pieces."

The comment on the weather would indicate that the traveler encountered a cold snap unusual for the last of November. He had one very uncomfortable experience. Setting out alone to visit the lead mines at Potosi he lost the way in the hills of the Meramec river, shivered all night and came back to St. Louis.

"St. Louis is situated in lat. 38, 18 N. long. 89.36 W., from which you would be inclined to believe the climate somewhat warmer than that of New York, in lat. 40. 40; but I certainly do not think I ever experienced in that city colder weather, at this season of the year, than I have felt in St. Louis for these few days past. I made this remark to some gentlemen who have lived here for four or five years past, but who formerly resided in Philadelphia; and they were of opinion that the winters generally were equally severe, but did not last so long."

The fame of feminine St. Louis had reached Christian Schultz before he saw the white walls of the town. He investigated and was satisfied and found the ladies "eminently entitled" to their reputation.

"The ladies of St. Louis, I had heard, generally celebrated through all the lower country for their beauty,

modesty, and agreeable manners, as well as for their taste and the splendor of their dress. I was, therefore, very happy in having an opportunity of accepting an invitation to one of their balls, on the first Sunday evening after my arrival; having previously attended the chapel, for the express purpose of being able to form some kind of judgment with respect to their claims; and I must confess, that they appeared to be eminently entitled to all that I had heard in their favor."

## The First Magazine Article on St. Louis

St. Louis, as seen from the Illinois side in 1807, was inspiring. So it seemed to a lady traveler. With artistic vision and facile pen the impression was preserved. It appeared in the "Literary Gazette" of Cincinnati. The name of the writer does not accompany the article. Influx of "the Bostons," as the old French habitants called the newcomers, had begun. It is surmised that the contributor to this pioneer periodical was the wife or daughter of some American who was staking his fortune on the future of St. Louis.

"The traveler that pauses upon the eastern bank of the river immediately directs his eye to the opposite side of the river. He there contemplates a bold and rocky eminence, where the primeval materials of nature's strength seem piled in rude and disordered magnificence. The ascent is steep and difficult, and has the aspect at a distance of threatening to exclude you from the town, which it beautifully elevates to a considerable height above the water, at the same time proving an impenetrable rampart to ward off the encroachments of the river. You would almost believe the houses were united and that the roofs upheld and supported one another, so gradual and so beautifully has nature bent her brow for the reception of this village. From the opposite shore it has a majestic appearance, which it borrows from its elevated site and from a range of Spanish towers that crown the summit of the hill and lend their Gothic rudeness to complete a picture which scarcely has a parallel. The principal houses of St. Louis are surrounded by massive walls of stone to serve as defense in time of danger, the port holes with which they are pierced testifying that they were constructed as fortifications to repel the bold and sanguinary savage. Within these rough enclosures are planted trees of various descriptions, which, like infancy smiling in the arms of age, serve to decorate the otherwise sombre aspect of the town."

## St. Louis and Its Promise Viewed by Brackenridge

Judge Henry M. Brackenridge came from Pittsburg to St. Louis in 1811. His description of St. Louis, as he saw it and studied it, is graphic. The forecast of the city by this writer is the more remarkable when it is remembered that both Ste. Genevieve and St. Charles at that time crowded St. Louis in population and that immigration seemed to be inclined to favor New Madrid. In his "Views of Louisiana" Judge Brackenridge wrote of St. Louis:

"This place occupies one of the best situations on the Mississippi, both as to site and geographical position. In this last respect the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi has certainly much greater natural advantages, but the ground is subject to inundation; and St. Louis has taken a start which it will most probably retain. It is probably not saying too much that it bids fair to be second to New Orleans in importance on this river.

"St. Louis will probably become one of those great reservoirs of the valley between the Rocky Mountains and the Alleghany, from whence merchandise will be distributed to an extensive country. It unites the advantages of three noble rivers, Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri. When their banks shall become the residence of millions, when flourishing towns shall arise, can we suppose that every vendor of merchandise will look to New Orleans for a supply, or to the Atlantic cities. There must be a place of distribution somewhere between the mouth of the Ohio and Missouri. Besides, a trade to the northern parts of New Spain will be opened, and a direct communication to the East Indies by way of the Missouri may be more than dreamt; in this case St. Louis will become the Memphis of the American Nile."

When Brackenridge made his predictions, St. Louis had 1,400 people. Immigration was beginning. This writer says of the impression he received as he went about St. Louis, first taking the view from the Illinois bank:

"In a disjointed and scattered manner, it extends along the river a mile and a half, and we form the idea of a large and elegant town. Two or three large and costly

buildings (though not in the modern taste) contribute in producing this effect. On closer examination the town seems to be composed of an equal proportion of stone walls, houses and fruit trees, but the illusion still continues. In ascending the second bank, which is about forty feet above the level of the plain, we have the town below us, and a view of the Mississippi in each direction, and of the fine country through which it passes. When the curtain of wood which conceals the American bottom shall have been withdrawn, or a vista formed by opening farms to the river, there will be a delightful prospect into that rich and elegant tract. There is a line of works on this second bank, erected for defense against the Indians, consisting of several circular towers, twenty feet in diameter and fifteen feet in height, a small stockaded fort and a stone breastwork. These are at present entirely unoccupied and waste, excepting the fort in one of the buildings of which the courts are held, while the other is used as a prison. Some distance from the termination of this line, up the river, there are a number of Indian mounds and remains of antiquity, which, while they are ornamental to the town, prove that in former times those places had also been chosen as the site, perhaps, of a populous city.

The suburbs of St. Louis, at the time of Judge Brackenridge's coming, began where Fourth street is today. A favorite walk, which was westward into the country, is described. The springs the writer mentions were not far from where the Wabash railroad now crosses Manchester avenue.

"Looking to the west a most charming country spreads itself before us. It is neither very level nor hilly, but of an agreeable waving surface, and rising for several miles with an ascent almost imperceptible. Except a small belt to the north, there are no trees; the rest is covered with scrubby oak, intermixed with hazels and a few trifling thickets of thorn, crab-apple, or plum trees. At the first glance we are reminded of the environs of a great city; but there are no country seats, or even plain farm houses, it is a vast waste, yet by no means a barren soil. Such is the appearance until, turning to the left, the eye again catches the Mississippi. A number of fine springs take their rise here and contribute to the uneven appearance. The greater part face to the southwest and aid in forming a beautiful rivulet, which, a short distance below the town, gives itself to the river. I have often been delighted, in

my solitary walks, to trace the rivulet to its sources. Three miles from town, but within view, among a few tall oaks, it rises in four or five silver fountains, within a short distance of each other, presenting a picture to the fancy of the poet, or the pencil of the painter. I have fancied myself for a moment on classic ground, and beheld the Naiads pouring the stream from their urns. Close to the town there is a fine mill, erected by Mr. Chouteau on this streamlet; the dam forms a beautiful sheet of water, and affords much amusement, in fishing and fowling, to the people of the town. The common field of St. Louis was formerly enclosed on this bank, consisting of several thousand acres; at present there are not more than two thousand under cultivation; the rest of the ground looks like the worn common in the neighborhood of a large town, the grass kept down and short and the loose soil in several places cut open into gaping ravines."

## Creoles of St. Louis as Franchere Saw Them

Gabriel Franchere wrote an excellent narrative of his experience with Astor in the fur trade. He dissented from the estimate which Washington Irving put upon the St. Louis of that time:

"And although it forms no part of the narrative of my voyage, yet as subsequent visits to the West and an intimate knowledge of St. Louis, enable me to correct Mr. Irving's poetical rather than accurate description of that place, I may well do it here. St. Louis now bids fair to rival ere long the 'Queen of the West'; Mr. Irving describes her as a small trading place, where trappers, half-breeds, gay, frivolous Canadian boatmen, etc., etc., congregated and revelled, with that lightness and buoyancy of spirit inherited from their French forefathers; the indolent creole caring for little more than the enjoyment of the present hour; a motley population, half-civilized, half-barbarous, thrown on his canvas into one general confused (I allow highly picturesque) mass, without respect of persons; but it is fair to say with due homage to the sketcher, who has verged slightly on caricature in the use of that humor-loving pencil admired by all the world, that St. Louis even then contained its noble, industrious, and I may say, princely merchants. It could boast its Chouteaus, Soulards, Cerres, Chenies, Valles, and La Croiz, with other kindred spirits, whose descendants prove the worth of their sires by their own and are now among the leading business men, as their fathers were the pioneers of the flourishing St. Louis."



# The Climate of St. Louis as it was in 1811

Writing from St. Louis about 1811, John Bradbury, the English naturalist, described the climate as he had found it from experience extending through several seasons:

“The climate is very fine. The spring commences about the middle of March in the neighborhood of St. Louis, at which time the willow, the elm, and maples are in flower. The spring rains usually occur in May, after which month the weather continues fine, almost without interruption, until September, when rain again occurs about the equinox, after which it remains again fine, serene weather until near Christmas, when winter commences. About the beginning or middle of October the Indian summer begins, which is immediately known by the change that takes place in the atmosphere, as it now becomes hazy, or what they term smoky. This gives to the sun a red appearance, and takes away the glare of light, so that all the day, except a few hours about noon, it may be looked at with the naked eye without pain; the air is perfectly quiescent and all is stillness, as if nature, after her exertions during the summer, was now at rest. The winters are sharp, but it may be remarked that less snow falls, and they are much more moderate on the west than on the east side of the Alleghanies in similar latitudes.”

## John Mullanphy as a Host in 1821

"The St. Louis millionaire," Brackenridge called John Mullanphy. There were other men of wealth in the town in the first two decades after American occupation, but Brackenridge picks Mullanphy for "the millionaire." He tells how the million came about. About the time of the war of 1812, Mullanphy was speculating in cotton. He had on hand a considerable quantity at New Orleans. General Jackson took this cotton to make the breastworks behind which he waited for Pakenham, the English general. Mullanphy went to "Old Hickory" and protested. "This is your cotton?" said General Jackson. "Then no one has a better right to defend it. Take a musket and stand in the ranks." When the war was over, Mullanphy tore the breastworks to pieces, shipped his bales of cotton to England and cleared a million dollars. That is the story Brackenridge tells preliminary to this:

"One day he called to see me and invited me to dine with him. I found him in a large brick house, perhaps the largest in the town, unfurnished and untenanted with the exception of a back room of which he was the sole occupant. Here I found him seated before a wood fire (coal was not in use at that time), while two catfish heads were broiling on two chips of wood. 'There,' said he, 'you see your dinner; that head is yours and this is mine; we must each do the cooking.' It was a Barmecide feast, and I determined to humor it. We had some excellent bread and butter, and to make amends for the dishes, drank exquisite Madeira out of dirty tumblers. The dessert, I must add, was the most substantial part of the entertainment; going to his safe he brought forth a bag of dollars and placing it on the table, 'There,' said he, 'is a retaining fee if I should want your professional services.'"

# The Inaugural Address of The First Mayor

St. Louis became a city in 1823. Dr. William Carr Lane, who had come from Pennsylvania a few years previously, was elected mayor. He received 122 of the 220 votes cast. His inaugural address was a gem:

“The fortunes of the inhabitants may fluctuate, you and I may sink into oblivion and even our families become extinct, but the progressive rise of our city is morally certain. The causes of its prosperity are inscribed on the very face of the earth and are as permanent as the foundations of the soil and the sources of the Mississippi. These matters are not brought to your recollection for the mere purpose of eulogy, but that a suitable system of improvements may always be kept in view, that the rearing of the infant city may correspond with the expectations of such a mighty futurity.”

# The Show Places of St. Louis in 1825

In Travels in North America, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, describes the museum of General William Clark as he saw it in 1825:

"We then went to see Mrs. Clark, who, through the secretary of her husband, Mr. Alexander, exhibited to us the museum collected by the governor on his travels, and since considerably augmented. Mr. Alexander showed us articles of Indian clothing of different kinds, and various materials. Except the leather, the larger part of these materials were American, or rather entirely European in their origin. A single garment alone was made by the Cherokees of cotton, which was pulled, spun, wove on a loom, made by an Indian and even dyed blue by them. Besides several weapons of different tribes, wooden tomahawks, or battle-axes, in one of them was a sharp piece of iron to strike into the skulls of their prisoners; another made of elk's-horn, bows of elk's-horn and of wood, spears, quivers, and arrows, a spear-head of an Indian of the Columbia river, hewed out of a flint, a water-proof basket of the same people, in which cooking can be performed, several kinds of tobacco pipes, especially the calumet, or great pipe of peace. The head of this pipe is cut out of a sort of argillaceous earth or serpentine; in time of war, the spot, where this earth is dug out, is regarded as neutral, and hostile parties, who meet each other at that place, cannot engage in any thing inimical against each other. The pipe, which the commissioners of the United States use at treaties with the Indians has a heavy silver head, and a peculiarly handsome ornamented wooden stem.

"Farther, Mr. Alexander showed us the medals which the Indian chiefs have received at different periods from the Spanish, English and American governments, and the portraits of various Indian chiefs who have been at St. Louis to conclude treaties with the governor, who is also Indian agent. Among the remarkable things in natural history, we noticed an alligator, eight feet long; a pelican; the horns of a wild goat, shot by the governor in his tour

among the Rocky Mountains; the horns of a mountain ram, and those of an elk, several bearskins, among others, of the white bear, buffalo, elk, skunk, which were sewed together in a robe, skins of martins, ferrets, etc., etc.; moreover, several petrifications of wood, and animal subjects, among others, of elephants' teeth, a piece of rock-salt, tolerably white, yet not shooting in crystals, as the English; various crystals; a large piece of rock crystal; very handsome small agates, which are here taken for cornelians, etc. Among the curiosities, the most remarkable were two canoes, the one of animal-hide, the other of tree-bark, a peace-belt which consists of a white girdle set with glass beads two hands breadth wide; farther, snowshoes, nets which are drawn over an oval frame, also the rackets, which they use in playing their game of ball, etc., etc.

"After the examination of this interesting collection, we paid our visit to Mr. Chouteau. I gave him the description of the opening of a Roman mound, at which I was present with my father in the year 1813, and he expressed his astonishment at the great similarity between these mounds and those of the Indian grave-hills. Among the stone war-hatchets in the governor's museum, there are several resembling the battle-axes which are found in Germany in these mounds.

"Mr. Chouteau was a venerable man of eighty years, a native of New Orleans. He told us that at the founding of St. Louis, he felled the first tree. His house, resembling in architecture the old government house in New Orleans, was the first substantial building erected here. The conversation with this aged man, who received us like a patriarch surrounded by his descendants, was very interesting. He was of the opinion that the people from whom the Indian antiquities have come down to us, either by pestilential disease or by an all-destroying war, must have been blotted from the earth. He believed that Behring's Straits were more practicable formerly than at present—at least they must have been Asiatic hordes that came to America. How, otherwise, (asked he) could the elephants, since there have been none ever upon this continent, have reached the American bottom, where their bones are now found? This bottom is a very rich body of land, running south opposite to St. Louis. Mounds and fortifications are found there. Here the elephant bones are not scattered

about, but found lying in a long row near each other, as if they had been killed in a battle, or at the assault of some fortification."

## The Estimate of a King's Representative in 1825

The Duke of Saxe-Weimar was one of the earliest European travelers to visit St. Louis. He came in 1825. Ten years later the foreigners arrived in flocks to write books about this country. When he returned to his own land, the report of the duke's observations was published in a book bearing the title of "Travels in North America." The journey was of an official character. It was under the patronage of the King of the Netherlands.

"St. Louis has existed since 1763 and was settled by French and Canadians. In that year, when Canada, with the left bank of the Illinois and Mississippi, were ceded to England, these people were not willing to be English subjects and withdrew to the right bank of the Mississippi, which then was under the dominion of France, but soon afterwards was given up to Spain. The immigrants built St. Louis and St. Charles on the Missouri, as well as several other little places. They lived a long time cut off from the civilized world and surrounded by Indians.

"A glance at the map of the United States shows what an interesting place St. Louis is destined to become, when the white population has spread itself more westwardly from the Mississippi, and up along the Missouri river. Perhaps it may yet become the capital of a great nation."

Of the appearance of the settlement at that time the duke wrote:

"St. Louis lies upon a rather high rocky foundation on the right bank of the Mississippi, and stretches itself out nearly a mile in length in the direction of the river. The most of the houses have a garden towards the water, the earth is supported by walls, so that the gardens form so many terraces. The city contains about 4,000 inhabitants. It consists of one long, main street, running parallel with the river, from which several side streets run to the heights behind the city. Here single houses point out the space where another street parallel with the main street, can one day be built. The generality of the houses are new, built of brick, two stories high; some are of rough stone, and others of wood and clay, in the Spanish taste,

resembling the old houses in New Orleans. Round the city along the heights formerly ran a wall, but it is now taken away. At the corners stood massive round guard towers, the walls of which one still can see."

Like many other visitors to St. Louis in the early part of the century the Duke of Saxe-Weimar was greatly interested in the mounds.

"In a northern direction from the city are seven artificial hillocks in two rows, which form a parallelogram. They belong to the much-talked-of Indian mounds and fortifications of which numbers are found on the shores of the Ohio and Mississippi, and which are dispersed over these regions from Lake Erie to New Mexico. There exist neither documents nor traditions concerning the erection of these works, or of the tribe of people who erected them. In some a great quantity of human bones has been discovered; in others, on the contrary, nothing. This double row, near St. Louis, has not yet been examined."



## Commercial Opportunity, St. Louis, Eighty Years Ago

Charles Sealsfield, an English traveler, came to St. Louis in 1827. He wrote, for English consumption, "The Americans as They Are." He made some surprising revelations of the ways in which St. Louis traders took advantage of the New Orleans market when the Ohio, the Wabash and the Tennessee rivers were "almost dried up":

"On the third day, at 12 o'clock, we reached the town of St. Louis. This town extends in a truly picturesque situation for the length of two miles along the river, in three parallel streets, rising one above the other in the form of terraces on a stratum of limestone. The houses are for the most part built of this material and surrounded with gardens. The number of buildings amounts to 620, and that of the inhabitants to 5,000. Its principal buildings are a Catholic and two Protestant churches, a branch bank of the United States, and the bank of St. Louis, the court-house, the government house, an academy and a theatre. Besides these there are a number of wholesale and retail stores and an abundance of billiard tables and dancing rooms. The trade of St. Louis is not so extensive as that of Louisville and less liable to interruption as the navigation is not impeded in any season of the year, the Mississippi being at all times navigable for the largest vessels. An exception indeed occurred in 1802 when the Ohio and other rivers were almost dried up. The inhabitants of St. Louis have a never-failing channel for carrying their produce to market. This they generally do when the rivers which empty themselves into the Mississippi are so low that they have no apprehension of finding any competition in New Orleans. Eighty dollars was the general price per bullock which, at a later period would not have obtained \$25. Flour was \$8, whereas, two months afterwards, abundance could be had for \$2.50. In the same proportion they sold every other article. At the time of our arrival at St. Louis there were in this port five steam vessels and thirty-five other boats.

“St. Louis is a sort of New Orleans on a smaller scale. In both places are to be found a number of coffee houses and dancing rooms. The French are seen engaged in the same amusements and fashions that formerly characterized the Creoles of Louisiana. For the last five years men of property and respectability, attracted by the superior advantages of the situation, have settled at St. Louis, and their example and influence have been conducive of some good to public morals. Slavery, which is introduced here, though so ill-adapted to a northern state, contributes not a little to the aristocratic notions of the people, the least of whom, if he can call himself the master of one slave, would be ashamed to put his hand to any work. Still there is more ready money among the inhabitants than in any of the western states and prices are demanded accordingly.”

# A D r e a m o f St. Louis in 1830

Prophecy was more in vogue two or three generations ago than it is now. The pace of the present day is sufficiently rapid for most minds. It engrosses the attention to the discouragement of guessing far into the future. In 1830, Professor John Russell, an educator and a literary man of considerable reputation in the Mississippi Valley, entertained readers of that period with a description of St. Louis "three hundred years hence." His story was published in the Illinois Monthly Magazine, the chief literary periodical west of Cincinnati. Professor Russell fell asleep, according to his imagination, at the foot of a tree on the Illinois bluffs, near Shurtleff College, or perhaps it was not far from the classic shades of McKendree College, then two years old. The exact locality he did not designate. When he awoke the year was 2130. He was amazed to find himself in a very closely settled region. He walked along a road between rows of cottages and gardens. His own words tell the wonders he saw:

"At length I reached a spot which I recognized in a moment;—the bluff which overlooks the great American bottom." How beautiful a prospect was presented! The deep forest that once covered it had disappeared, and, as I could distinguish from the heights of the bluff, the whole bottom was teeming with population. 'Every rood maintained its man.' The little squares of land, bounded by a green hedgerow, with a house or cottage to each, looked beautifully in the distance. At intervals, columns of smoke were thrown up from the chimneys of large factories, and the sound of the steam engine was heard in every direction. Industry is not among the virtues of a slave, and I knew by the busy throng of old and young around, the low, straw-thatched, but neat cottages, that my native land was yet free.

"My thoughts reverted to St. Louis and I was ruminating upon the various changes that had probably taken place in its wealth and population when that city, with its thousand spires, burst upon my view! How glorious was the

sight presented by the great Father of Waters! A forest of masts lined both shores for miles and every flag of Europe waved at the mast-head of the steamships that ploughed its waters. I entered the city by one of the iron bridges that spanned the river. The streets near the water first excited my attention. The bustle of loading and unloading the vessels; the constant discharging of cannon from steamships arriving and departing, carrying on commerce with every portion of the globe; the various costumes and dialects of merchants and sailors from China, Japan, and the islands of the Pacific, prepared me to learn, without surprise, that St. Louis, in the interior of the most fertile region of the globe, far exceeded in wealth and population the largest city of the eastern hemisphere.

“The language of the city bore a much nearer affinity to my own than that of the country. Many new words had been introduced, and others had acquired a new definition and pronunciation; but I had less difficulty in understanding those who appeared to be the educated. Subsequently I was informed that the English language was divided into three distinct dialects, differing from each other in writing and in sound: that of the British Islands, that of America, and that of India; produced by the difference of climate, governments, customs, and the languages of the people intermingling with each other.

“I left the streets near the wharves, and passed a great distance beyond the former boundary of the city, yet all was still dense. The display of merchandise from the lofty buildings that lined the streets, was rich beyond description. The stream of passing people, the rattling of carriages on the pavement, the cries of people vending their commodities in the street, and the din of the artisan’s hammer, were all mingled together in one confused sound. I was gratified that so large a proportion of buildings were devoted to religious worship.

“The sun was now setting over this wilderness of houses. His parting beams flamed on the gilded spires of this metropolis, and reminded me of the years when I had beheld him sinking behind an unbroken line of forest. I remembered the friend with whom I had often walked at that hour, on the banks of a romantic little lake in the environs of the city. I wished once more to tread the spot, hallowed by the memory of a long-lost friend. With some diffi-

culty I reached the vicinity of the lake. Thick clouds of smoke hung over that portion of the city, caused by the thousand fires of the steam engines which the lake supplied with water. Here was the theater of the most extensive manufactures of the West. I would gladly have entered these manufactories, but the labors of the day were closed, and I heard only the expiring sound of business, and saw the fading wreaths of smoke. The artisans were retiring to their homes in the high buildings of the dirty and narrow streets. I rejoiced, as I saw this multitude of all ages and sexes, that employment and sustenance was afforded to so numerous a population, and I remembered with exultation, that I had warmly advocated every plan that was suggested to induce immigration to the West, even giving the lands, which belonged to all, as a bribe to entice settlers. Now was the good policy of these measures apparent wherever I went, in the overflowing population of country and town."

## A Scotchman's Search for "Common Life" in St. Louis

"The true state of every nation is the state of common life." James Stuart took this quotation from Samuel Johnson as the text of his two-volume description of North America. Stuart was a Scotchman. He spent three years journeying in this country. He visited St. Louis in 1830. His book was published in Edinburgh in 1833. In his preface Stuart said: "If the following pages have any merit, it consists merely in their conveying, in plain language, a faithful and candid representation of the facts which the author observed and noted in the places where they presented themselves." In this spirit the author looked for "common life" in St. Louis and found it in a hotel which did not have wash basins in the bed rooms:

"We arrived in St. Louis on Sunday, the 25th of April (1830), on so cold a morning that the first request I made on reaching the City hotel, in the upper part of the town, was for a fire, which was immediately granted. The hotel turned out a very comfortable one. It contains a great deal of accommodation. The only inconvenience I felt arose from the people not being accustomed, as seems generally the case in the western country, to place water-basins and a towel in every bed-room. The system of washing at some place near the well is general, but the waiters or chambermaids never refuse to bring everything to the bed-room that is desired. It is, however, so little the practice to bring a washing apparatus to the bed-rooms that they are very apt to forget a general direction regularly to do so. We had a great quantity of fine poultry at this house; and the table, upon the whole, was extremely well managed."

The first view of St. Louis in those days was very different from what it is now:

"The approach by water to St. Louis, which may be properly called the metropolis of the country on the west bank of the Mississippi, is very handsome. The bank rises rapidly for about twenty feet above the river, and then more gradually for forty or fifty feet further. The side of the river, as well as part of the plain above it, is

covered with the houses which extend along the river in three parallel streets, rising above each other. The principal street is above a mile long. St. Louis was first settled by the French about the year 1765. There are several hotels. There is a Catholic cathedral, two Presbyterian churches, one Baptist and several other meeting houses."

The natural advantages of the city were beginning to be apparent. Stuart noted them comprehensively:

"There is much rich land and a great deal of prairie on both sides of the river in the neighborhood of St. Louis. It was essentially a French place until within the last fifteen years; but the American population is now great and the town is in a very thriving state. St. Louis is more nearly in the center of the great territories of which the United States consist than any other city in the Union, and the most advantageously situated for commerce, near the point of union of the greatest of the American rivers. The Mississippi is at all times navigable between St. Louis and New Orleans. The fur trade is carried on to a great extent; and the neighborhood of the lead mines, the most extensive on the globe (consisting of the richest ore and covering an area of more than 3,000 square miles), render St. Louis the chief mart for lead. St. Louis is not only rich in this mineral, but contains immense quantities of the richest iron ore and a prodigious field of lime, as well as coal. The population consists of about 7,000 persons. Several newspapers are printed here."

The Scotchman did not neglect to look into religious conditions:

"I attended divine worship in the Presbyterian church on the day I reached St. Louis (April, 1830). Having asked the landlord of the inn which was the best church to go to, he at once replied, 'I go to no church, but the Presbyterian minister is the rage.' The Presbyterian minister, Mr. Potts, delivered a very good sermon upon this text: 'The sting of sin is death,' in a very neatly seated church in the upper part of the town. It was a funeral sermon, in consequence of the death of Mr. Woods, an English gentleman from London, one of the elders or deacons of the church. In the afternoon I went into the meeting house of people of color. They had one of themselves preaching sensibly, though it appeared he was not a man of much education. The sermon was, in great measure, composed of Scriptural quotations, and was delivered impressively; but there was far less manifestation of excitement than in a church of people of color, which I afterwards attended in New York."

Free transportation on the Wiggins ferry appealed to the Scotchman and led to an examination of that garden spot—the American bottom:

“There is a steam ferry boat across the river, which is a mile broad. The fare is six pence sterling and \$70 is about the amount of the average daily receipts. The first boat put upon the river was a steamboat, and it answered so well that a steamboat line has now been established, and the concern is a very good one, belonging to New York people, one of whom, Captain Wiggins, commands the boat. He is a very intelligent person, and seemed very anxious to substitute a low-pressure engine for the high-pressure one in the boat. I entered into conversation with him and, as soon as he found I was from Britain and traveling for amusement, he directed his collector to receive no money from me no matter how often I might cross. I availed myself of this privilege again and again, even in taking a carriage and horses across.

“After crossing the river, I engaged one of the neighboring farmers, Mr. Abrams, to drive me out for a few hours over the immense prairie adjoining, which, in one direction, is one hundred miles long. The prairie was in great beauty. It consisted of beautiful undulating ground, in which there were tracks of roads generally dry. It was covered with wild strawberries, and with crab apples. Here and there, there were lakes, and now and then we came to a plantation of ground, enclosed with the ordinary strong railing of this country, a good cottage and some cultivated land. One of the planters whom I saw, a Frenchman, from Verdun, gave us a glass of excellent cider. He is just now finishing a house in the middle of the prairie, attached to which he has got three hundred acres of land. He gives a magnificent description of the quantity of game that surrounds him. He and a boy have killed sixty wild ducks in a morning. There is no restriction against him or any of the planters putting as many cattle or horses as they choose on the unenclosed part of the prairie land, or cutting as much grass as they like; but the extent of the ground is so great that a good herdsman is indispensably necessary to look after cattle put upon the prairie. Mr. Flint says, in reference to Missouri, what is perfectly true, that ‘hundreds of thousands of acres of first-rate wheat land, covered with grass and perfectly free from shrubs and bushes, invite the plow; and that if the country was cultivated to a proper extent, it might be the granary of the world.’”



## “The Rambler in North America”

“The Rambler in North America” was the title Charles Joseph Latrobe chose for his book which was published in London. Mr. Latrobe traveled in the west in 1833. He published his impressions in 1835, dedicating the volume to Washington Irving. The motive which inspired his visit to the west, he gave in this extraordinary sentence:

“I desired to follow into their places of refuge and retreat, the crowd of human beings which the last two centuries had sent in annual swarms upon the pathway opened across the great western waters by the constancy and daring of Columbus;—men of all nations, of all ranks and degrees, those of unsullied purity of life and character, and others who were steeped to the lips in crime;—the patriot, the dreamer after Utopian schemes of happiness and liberty;—men goaded by political and religious persecution;—the disappointed in heart and purpose;—hundreds incited by speculation, thousands by poverty;—the tens of thousands who, having all to hope and nothing to lose, had disappeared from the countries of the East, had gone and seemingly buried themselves under the deep shade of the western forest or beneath the tall grass of the western prairie.”

It was to be expected that the observations of the Rambler in St. Louis would be sociological. And so they were:

“Since this part of the continent became subject to the flag of the United States, the city of St. Louis, overrun by the speculative New Englanders, has begun to spread over a large extent of ground on the bank of the river, and promises to become one of the most flourishing cities of the west. A new town has in fact sprung up by the side of the old one, with long, well-built streets and handsome rows of warehouses, constructed of excellent gray limestone, quarried on the spot. The inhabitants, of French extraction, are, however, still numerous, both in their part of the town and in the neighboring villages; and it is amusing to an European to step aside from the hurry and bustle of the upper streets, full of pale, scheming faces,

depressed brows, and busy fingers, to the quiet quarters of the lower division, where many a characteristic sight and sound may be observed. Who can peep into the odd little coffee-houses with their homely billiard tables—see those cosy balconies and settees—mark the prominent nose, rosy cheek, and the contented air and civil demeanor of the males, and the intelligent eye and gossiping tongue of the females—listen to the sound of the fiddle, or perchance the jingle of a harpsichord, or spinnet, from the window of the wealthier habitant, crisp and sharp like a box of crickets, without thinking of scenes in the provinces of the mother country?”

# A New Yorker in the Ancient City

"A Winter in the West by an anonymous New Yorker," presents a picture of St. Louis as it appeared to an American author's vision in 1835:

"You last left me in the ancient city of St. Louis, the capital and metropolis, though not yet the commercial emporium of the grand valley of the Mississippi—once the ultima thule of western adventure, and still the depot of the fur trade and bureau of Indian affairs. Here the Spaniard, the Frenchman and the American have in turn held rule and their blood, with no slight sprinkling of that of the aborigines, now commingles in the veins of its inhabitants.

"The aspect of the town partakes of the characteristics of all of its original possessors: In one section you find it built up entirely with the broad, steep-roofed stone edifices of the French, and the Spaniard's tall stuccoed dwelling raising its tiers of open corridors above them, like a once showy but half-defaced galleon in a fleet of battered frigates; while another will present you only with the clipper-built brick houses of the American residents,—light as a Baltimore schooner, and pert-looking as a Connecticut smack. The town lies on two plateaus, extending along the Mississippi for some miles. The first of these steppes rises gently from the water, till, at the distance of about a hundred yards, it becomes perfectly level, and affords a fine plane for the main street of the place, which runs parallel to the river. An acclivity, rather longer and steeper, then intervenes, when the second plateau commences, and runs back a perfectly level plain, extending for miles in every direction. This plain, near the town, is covered with shrub oaks and other undergrowth; but it finally assumes the character of a naked prairie, which probably at no very distant time extended here to the banks of the Mississippi.

"That part of the town immediately upon the river is built, in great measure, on a rock that lies a few feet below the surface of the soil; the stone excavated in digging the cellars affording a fine material for the erection of some

substantial warehouses that line the wharf. The site, for a great city, apart from its admirable geographical position, is one of the finest that could be found; and having been laid out of late years with broad rectangular streets, St. Louis will, however it may increase in size, always be an airy, cheerful-looking place. But its streets command no interesting prospects, and indeed the town has nothing of scenic beauty in its position, unless viewed from beneath the boughs of the immense trees on the alluvial bottom opposite, when the whitewashed walls and gray stone parapets of the old French houses present rather a romantic appearance."

The New Yorker was impressed with the mounds. He offered the suggestion that they be preserved in a park "which might be the pride of St. Louis." Unfortunately there was no civic league in those days. The mounds went the way of non-productive property just as the New Yorker feared they would:

"St. Louis can boast one class of objects among its sources of attraction, which are alone sufficient to render it one of the most interesting places in the Union. It is a collection of those singular ancient mounds, which, commencing in the western part of the State of New York, and reaching, as Humboldt tells us, to the interior of Mexico, have so entirely set at naught the ingenuity of the antiquary. The mounds of the north suburb of St. Louis occupy a commanding position on the Mississippi, and cover ground enough, together, for a large body of men to camp upon. They stand distinct from each other, generally in the form of truncated pyramids, with a perfect rectangular base. At one point four or five tumuli are so grouped together as to form nearly two sides of a square, while at another, several hundred yards off, two or more detached mounds rise singly from the plain. The summit of one of these is occupied by a public reservoir, for furnishing the town with drinking water; the supply being forced up to the tank by a steam engine on the banks of the river, and subsequently distributed by pipes throughout the city. This mound, with the exception of one or two enclosed within the handsome grounds of General Ashley, is the only one fenced from the destruction that always sooner or later overtakes such non-productive property, when in the suburbs of a rapidly growing city; and it is a subject of surprise to a stranger, that, considering the want of public squares in the town, individual taste and public spirit do not unite

to preserve these beautiful eminences in their exact form, and connect them by an enclosure, with shrubbery and walks, thus forming a park which might be the pride of St. Louis. The prettily cultivated gardens in the environs, and the elegance and liberality shown in the construction of more than one new private dwelling in the heart of the town, evince that neither taste nor means are wanting to suggest and carry into effect such an improvement."

# Practical Observations of a Farmer in 1835

"Patrick Shirreff, farmer," as he designates himself on the title page of his tour through North America, visited St. Louis just before 1835. "Being a farmer in the strictest sense of the word," he says, "and having written the volume at intervals snatched from professional duties, I make no pretensions to correctness, much less elegance of composition. My only aim has been to state plainly and freely what appeared to be truth, and I trust this will be received as an apology for any inaccuracies of style which may be discovered, and for such dogmatic and homespun expressions as may be considered inconsistent with good taste." Shirreff was from East Lothian. He was studying this country for the benefit of East Lothian farmers. His book was published in Edinburgh.

The information obtained in St. Louis was intensely practical:

"This is a place of extensive trade, being the chief depot of lead which is furnished in vast quantities by the states of Illinois and Missouri. Grist mills and other machinery are propelled by steam. I counted sixteen steamboats on the river, exclusive of one plying as a ferryboat. It is the chief place of wealth and trade on the Mississippi, with the exception of New Orleans, and may be justly considered the metropolis of the valley of the Mississippi."

"I visited the market night and morning, which was abundantly supplied with every necessary, brought forward by farmers from all parts of the country, and not retailed by stall-keepers. Many well-dressed white ladies, and blacks of both sexes, carried baskets over their arms, and were making purchases, but I did not observe a white gentleman. Here I first saw the egg-plant. For hen eggs  $9\frac{1}{2}$  pence a dozen and for skinned squirrels  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pence each, sterling money."

It was altogether natural for the East Lothian farmer to observe the soil. Mr Shirreff came to St. Louis overland, He traveled by wagon from St. Charles through St. Louis county.

“For nearly six miles before reaching St. Louis the road passes through a prairie country of undulating red clay, and apparently speedily getting into forest. The landlord told me he had visited this district many years before, which was then without a tree. There is a race course within three miles of St. Louis which appears well frequented. I had hitherto observed the vine growing chiefly by the sides of lakes and rivers but here it was growing on the highest and most elevated situations, loaded with fruit. The prevailing tree on the partially wooded part of the road was the oak. I first observed the catalpa tree in the streets of St. Charles, and the persimmon, in traveling to St. Louis. This fruit was disagreeable to my palate.

“Throughout my tour in the States of New England and Upper Canada, I had found the soil of all districts where the surface was considerably undulating uniformly of inferior quality. Michigan presented the same appearance and on a few of the prairies I fancied I could trace the same feature. I had considered the subject on different occasions and began to draw a general conclusion, which this day’s experience completely upset. Here the surface was one of the most undulating I had traveled over, and uniformly of fertile clay. I afterwards found some of the swelling grounds of Ohio of this character.”

# A Tribute to Picturesque St. Louis

Edmund Flagg's "The Far West," published in 1838, gave a charming picture of St. Louis as it was before the days of great industries and of unlimited soft coal consumption. Flagg came from Boston. He became an editor of a St. Louis paper and remained several years:

"Speeding onward, the lofty spire and dusky walls of the St. Louis Cathedral, on rounding a river bend, opened upon the eye, the gilded crucifix gleaming in the sunlight from its lofty summit, and then the glittering cupolas and church domes, and the fresh aspect of private residences, mingling with the bright foliage of forest trees interspersed, all swelling gently from the water's edge, recalled vividly the beautiful "Mistress of the North," 'as my eye has often lingered upon her from her magnificent bay. A few more spires and the illusion would be perfect. For beauty of outline in distant view, St. Louis is deservedly famed. The extended range of limestone warehouses circling the shore gives to the city a grandeur of aspect, as approached from the water, not often beheld, while the dome-rolling forest-tops stretching away in the rear, the sharp outline of the towers and the roofs against the western sky, and the funereal grove of steamboat pipes lingering the quay altogether make up a combination of features novel and picturesque."



## Wise Advice of a Traveling Clergyman

"Letters by the Way" were written for publication by the Rev. Dr. Humphrey in 1839, as he journeyed through the west. One of them was devoted to St. Louis. His chief criticism of that generation was the failure to provide parks. That was the time he urged "to secure fifty of a hundred acres for a grand park." The growth of the city surprised the divine.

"St. Louis is larger than I supposed, and appears to be advancing more rapidly than any other town that I have seen in the west. The city proper now contains about fifteen thousand inhabitants, and there are nearly as many more without the limits in the immediate neighborhood. Many hundreds of houses were built last year notwithstanding the pressure of the times, and many more are going up this year. Rents are enormously high, higher than in any Eastern city, not excepting New York itself, and I believe higher than anywhere else on the continent of America. For a handsome two-story brick house with one parlor in front, you would have to pay seven or eight hundred dollars per annum. St. Louis must, from its position, become a very large commercial city, and there is no prospect that any other town on the Mississippi above New Orleans will be able to compete with it. Already the landing, covered with iron and lead and all kinds of heavy goods, reminds you of one of the front streets of New York or Philadelphia. But why don't they build wharves here?"

## Charles Dickens' American Notes on St. Louis

Dickens' "American Notes," taken in 1842, created much resentment in some American cities. It is noteworthy that the treatment of St. Louis was in the main entirely fair and for the most part complimentary.

"On the fourth day after leaving Louisville we reached St. Louis. We went to a large hotel, called the Planter's House, built like an English hospital, with long passages and bare walls, and skylights above the room doors for free circulation of air. There were a great many boarders in it, and as many lights sparkled and glistened from the windows down into the street below, when we drove up, as if it had been illuminated on some occasion of rejoicing. It is an excellent house, and the proprietors have most bountiful notions of providing the creature comforts. Dining alone with my wife in her own room one day, I counted fourteen dishes on the table at once."

The master of description surely nodded when it came to a prediction on future comparison between St. Louis and Cincinnati:

"In the old French portion of the town the thoroughfares are narrow and crooked, and some of the houses are very quaint and picturesque, being built of wood, with tumbledown galleries from the windows, approachable by stairs, or rather ladders, from the street. There are queer little barber shops and drinking houses, too, in this quarter, and abundance of old tenements, with blinking casements, such as may be seen in Flanders. Some of these ancient habitations, with high garret gable windows perking into the roofs, have a kind of French shrug about them, and being lopsided with age, appear to hold their heads askew, besides, as if they were grimacing in astonishment at the American improvements.

"It is hardly necessary to say that these consist of wharves and warehouses and new buildings in all directions, and of a great many vast plans which are still 'progressing.' Already, however, some very good houses, broad streets and marble-fronted shops have gone so far ahead as to be in a state of completion; and the town bids fair, in a few years,

to improve considerably, though it is not likely ever to vie in point of elegance or beauty with Cincinnati."

Dickens paid just tribute to Rev. Dr. William Greenleaf Eliot, afterwards founder of Washington University, one of the most useful citizens St. Louis ever had:

"The Roman Catholic religion, introduced here by the early French settlers, prevails extensively. Among the public institutions are a Jesuit college, a convent for 'the ladies of the Sacred Heart,' and a large church attached to the college, which was in course of erection at the time of my visit, and was intended to be consecrated on the 2nd of December in the present year. The organ will be sent from Belgium. In addition to these establishments there is a Roman Catholic cathedral, dedicated to St. Francis Xavier, and a hospital founded by the munificence of a deceased resident, who was a member of that church. It also sends missionaries from hence among the Indian tribes.

"The Unitarian church is represented in this remote place, as in most other parts of America, by a gentleman of great worth and excellence. There are three free schools already erected and in full operation in this city. A fourth is building and will soon be opened."

## When James Gordon Bennett Rode into St. Louis

James Gordon Bennett, the founder of the New York Herald, traveled on horseback through the west in 1845. He found in St. Louis mushrooms so superior as to prompt him to say in his letter: "I must confess, with all my Eastern predilections, I am forced to give this Western city the credit of producing it in perfection." But Bennett saw more than mushrooms to praise in St. Louis:

"St. Louis, regarded as a business place, may present inducements almost unparalleled to business men. Its advantages and its situation render it so. Planted on a rocky foundation, the Mississippi passes by it quietly, while, above and below, this strange stream cuts a channel where it pleases. It is a city destined to command an influential place in the mercantile and manufacturing interest, while its growing morality will give it high rank in the religious world."

# An Epic on St. Louis in the Fifties

In the fifties a poet found a theme in St. Louis. His name was Hoit. The railroads had reached the Mississippi river. They were to be extended westward. Conditions inspired an epic:

“Within this vale, where mighty rivers wend  
In lengthened courses to their distant end;  
Commingling in the gulf, whose beckoning, plain,  
Guides to the bosom of the billowy main,  
Riseth a city all unknown to fame,  
Of recent note, St. Louis is its name.  
Here, sloping from the vast and hurrying bound,  
The shores rise gently, and spread high around;  
And shady groves adorn the lovely green,  
And Indian mounds o'erlook the varied scene;  
With stately temples and with streets arrayed,  
Sacred to commerce and the rites of trade.  
Twice fourscore souls are gathered here,  
Or people smiling villas near.”

“Hither converge the iron ways of steam,  
The rattling car and fire-projected team;  
From where the sun begins its eastern reign,  
Or bows his forehead to the western main;  
To bind, in strong embrace, this empire brood  
Of sovereign States, a lasting brotherhood;  
Or cities join, by quick transition strung  
Like beads of gold, o'er Freedom's bosom hung,  
And freemen smit with admiration join  
In social rites, at Freedom's sacred shrine.  
Now scan the center of her wide domain,  
Now welcome voyagers o'er the flowery plain,  
And test the generous cares to friendship paid  
By patriotic pride, and loftier cares outweighed;  
Nor fix the measure of our fruitful soil,  
When culture crowns the noble arts of toil.”

# The Mound City Seen by Kossuth's Friends

In a suite of a dozen or more persons which accompanied Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot through the United States in 1852, were Francis and Theresa Pulszky. They wrote "White, Red, Black." The title page explained that the contents of the book were "sketches of society in the United States during the visit of their guest." The guest was Kossuth. White, Red, Black were the three races of people inhabiting America. It is evident that the foreigners were alive to all information of entertaining character. Somebody in St. Louis supplied a surprising story of the founding of the city. Fortunately the tradition was not wholly accepted by the visitors. The narrative runs:

"St. Louis, next to New Orleans and Cincinnati, the most important of the cities in the Mississippi basin, was founded in 1764 by Pierre Laclede, the chairman of a company of merchants at New Orleans, to which the governor of Louisiana had granted the exclusive privilege of the fur trade with the Indians on the Mississippi and the Missouri. He went up the Mississippi, intending to raise a fort and trading point at the mouth of the Missouri. But, according to an anecdote, he fixed it thirteen miles below that point, only because the ladies of the party were tired of moving about, and would not proceed farther. Cincinnati, too, is said to have been laid out on its present site, because the officer of the United States forces, posted in Fort Washington, fell in love with the wife of a settler, whose house stood on the bend of the Ohio. The officer, desiring to live near her, transferred the wooden fort higher up the river, where it became the nucleus of the city. But whoever examines the sites of these great emporiums will easily perceive that their romantic traditions are scarcely to be credited; the cities could not be laid out on more favorable points than those they really occupy, nor can their sites be accidental."

Kossuth's reception in St. Louis was enthusiastic. Some of the incidents of the visit were sensational:

"When our boat yesterday arrived at the landing-place here in St. Louis, people jumped from the neighboring

steamboats on our deck, and poured into the state-room in such a compact mass, that the captain of the steamer requested Kossuth to proceed quickly ashore to prevent misfortune. Mischief had already been done, panes and lamps were broken. We pushed our way through the crowd and could scarcely escape its pressure by retiring into the next storehouse, not without losing the clogs which remained sticking in the mud. The city authorities shortly afterwards arrived and carried us up in procession to the hotel.

“Ever since our arrival the rain has been pouring in torrents; yet the people did not like that Kossuth’s address should be delayed; they met on Tuesday and thousands of them were drenched for two hours, while listening to his eloquent voice. It was a practical demonstration of sympathy; so much the more as the Jesuits had exerted all their influence to thwart the feeling for Hungary, which manifests itself in very striking incidents; a poor clerk came the day before yesterday to Kossuth, and left his golden watch on the table, as a contribution for European freedom, and when Kossuth refused to accept it, the young man declared he would take this as an insult. A farmer called, shook hands and said: ‘Thank you that you allowed me to see you. I must return today to my farm, and I was determined to shake hands with you. I set my very life on it, for I am a cruel man. D—— it! I might have killed myself with disappointment. But now I must give you something; I have nothing in my pocket but a poor knife, but this you must keep as a keepsake of a western farmer.’”

St. Louis was booming in the early fifties. Of material conditions the Hungarians wrote:

“Shortly after St. Louis had been founded, the country was ceded by France to Spain, and under her dominion the city hardly increased. There was no public school in the whole colony, no regular church; the villages were sometimes visited by missionaries; the currency consisted of deerskins. The French Creoles lived here in such an isolated and primitive simplicity, that though their honesty and hospitality have become proverbial, they could not compete with the Yankees, and soon, when under the rule of the United States, they were ‘improved off,’ by sharp Tennesseans and Kentuckians. But even in 1830 the population of St. Louis was but 6,500; in 1850, it had risen already to about 100,000. In the last twenty years the States of Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa have been rapidly filled with an enterprising population, and St. Louis has

become the market for a back country more extensive than that of Cincinnati; and yet the land between the Missouri and Mississippi is but scantily peopled; the increase of the 'Mound City' is therefore likely to continue on the same gigantic scale as heretofore.

"The principal articles of trade in St. Louis are—lumber, tobacco, hemp, flour, salt, beef, and pork, whiskey, the lead of Illinois, the commodities and manufactures of Europe and of the Eastern States. Rich iron deposits have been discovered in the State, but as yet their working remains unprofitable. The Missourians, therefore, though Democrats, (in St. Louis the Whigs are in majority), complain of the 'free trade tariff,' and wish to have their iron industry protected against English competition. There are in St. Louis but few manufactories, principally distilleries and flour-mills. One of the most important and most promising establishments is that for the preparation of the white lead. Shipbuilding is also carried on, on an extensive scale. Missouri has as yet no railways, but several lines have already been surveyed, and the great line to California must touch St. Louis, and will add to the importance of the city."

A glimpse of the St. Louis life of the period was given to the Hungarians and they described it:

"Today I visited a large American establishment belonging to Colonel O'Fallon. The place reminded me of a Hungarian house; a large solid stone building on a hill, in the midst of a park with stately trees, surrounded by cottages. But here the likeness ceased; the inmates were black slaves. As far as I saw, they are well fed and well clothed. When we arrived at the door a negro woman opened it; it was the former nurse of Mrs. Pope, the lady who accompanied me, the daughter of the proprietor. Black Lucy seemed delighted to see her young mistress, and brought all her children and grand-children to greet her—a numerous band of whoolly haired imps, by no means handsome; but Mrs. Pope petted them, and genuine affection seemed to exist on both sides."

"Tomorrow we leave St. Louis. On the whole it has left me the pleasant impression of young and expansive life."

One more story must be given before "White, Red, Black," is passed:

"As an instance of the unpractical way of the Creoles, and their dealing with the Americans, it is related that



a genuine Missourian, who wished to buy a negro from a Southern slave-dealer, was told upon inquiry that the price was five hundred dollars, and that, according to custom, the buyer may have one year's credit upon the purchase. The French Missourian become uneasy at this proposal; he was not accustomed to have debts. He therefore said that he would rather pay six hundred dollars at once to be done with it, and the southerner obligingly accepted the offer."

# St. Louis to Become an Island City

Delivering an address in 1851, Hudson E. Bridge pictured the future of St. Louis as an island city:

“Earnestness is the watchword of the people of St. Louis. At the present day especially they will prove themselves worthy to be citizens of this goodly city—whose future is rich in promise. A bright, enviable destiny awaits it—as the time is not distant when from one hundred to two hundred millions of our race will find their homes in this most fertile valley that a beneficent Being has bestowed upon the human race. And when these valleys and plains shall resound with the hum of the ceaseless industry of teeming millions, what then will be the bounds of our city? May she not become an Island City? With the mighty, restless Missouri for the northern; the magnificent Mississippi, as now, the eastern; and the pure, limpid, beautiful Meramec, the southern border! Situated as St. Louis is in the very heart of the valley, and comparatively speaking in the center of this continent, may not the time come when the pulsations of our commerce shall be felt from Baffin’s Bay to the Mexican Gulf, and vibrate with equal intensity along the shores of the placid Pacific, and from Panama to Prince William’s Sound?”

“The ruins of the ancient cities of the valley of the Nile excite our wonder and admiration. Yet we are laying the foundation of a city, on the banks of the Mississippi, that shall excel them in extent, wealth and refinement as the Mississippi excels in volume the Nile, or as the Anglo-Saxon or Celtic races excel in energy and intellectual greatness the ancient Copts. These hopes may be pronounced wild and visionary.”

## St. Louis Unappreciative, Stephen A. Douglas Said

Stephen A. Douglas spoke in St. Louis shortly before the Civil War. He was a United States Senator from Illinois, and was soon to receive the Presidential nomination from the northern wing of the Democratic party. While "The Little Giant" addressed himself chiefly to political issues he had something to say about Missouri and St. Louis, which warmed the hearts of his hearers with pride:

"I have said that I am glad to be here in your great State, and I am not impolite when I say that you are unappreciative of your powers here at this place. I have considered your natural resources; with you nature has been more than lavish, she has been profligate. Dear precious dame! Take your southern line of counties, there you grow as beautiful cotton as any section of this world; traverse your southeastern counties and you meet that prodigy in the world of mineralogy,—the Iron Mountain married to the Pilot Knob, about the base of each of which may be grown any cereal of the States of the great Northwest, or any one of our broad, outspread Western Territories. In your central counties you produce hemp and tobacco with these same cereals. Along your eastern border traverses the great Father of Waters like a silver belt about a maiden's waist. From west to east through your northern half the great Missouri pushes her way. In every section of your State you have coal, iron, lead, and various minerals of the finest quality. Indeed, fellow citizens, your resources are such that Missourians might arm a half million of men and wall themselves within the borders of their own State and withstand the siege of all the armies of this present world, in gradations of three years each between armistices, and never a Missouri soldier stretch his hand across that wall for a drink of water!"

## Seward's Prophecy of 14 Feet Through the Valley

Perhaps even more notable than the wonderful summing up of possibilities for Missouri by Douglas was the comprehensive appeal of William H. Seward to this State and to this city to grasp the opportunities offered. Seward was an Eastern man, a New Yorker. He was the chief contestant against Lincoln for the Presidential nomination at Chicago in 1860. He was an original expansionist in theory before he bought Alaska. Addressing a great audience at St. Louis he said:

"I see here one State that is capable of assuming the great trust of being the middle main, the mediator, the common center between the Pacific and the Atlantic—a State of vast extent, of unsurpassed fertility, of commercial facilities that are given to no other railroad State on the Continent; a State that grapples hold upon Mexico and Central America on the South, and upon Russia and British America on the North; and through which is the only thoroughfare to the Golden Gate of the Pacific. It is your interest to bind to Missouri the young States of the Pacific of this Continent, while they are yet green and tender, and hold them fast to you. When you have done this and secured the Pacific States firmly, you will have bound the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast, and have guaranteed an empire such as Alexander failed to conquer, and Bonaparte tried in vain to reduce under one common scepter, as his predecessor, Charlemagne, had done. And it will be the glory of Missouri to see established firmly the empire of the Republican Government of America over the entire continent of North America. And in saying what I do, I do not exclude the region which lies between us and the North Pole. And I dare not say where I would draw the line on the South."

Strong words to come from the Atlantic seaboard were those uttered by William H. Seward about the Mississippi. But Seward was a statesman, as broad as the land:

"What the Nile is to Egypt, what the great river Euphrates was to ancient Assyria, what the Ganges is to India, what the Yangste is to China, what the Danube

is to Europe, what the Amazon is to Brazil, all this, and even more than this, the Mississippi river is to the North American continent. In an earlier age, men would have worshipped the Mississippi; in this age they can do better, they can improve it."

## An Englishman's Uncomplimentary View and Prophecy

"A Great Country," embodied the "Impressions of America," which George Rose published in London in 1868. He was not fascinated by much that he saw. "To no one except a commercial traveler would a visit to Chicago prove a source of gratification," he wrote. Except for his hotel accommodations, which pleased him, he damned St. Louis with faint praise:

"After a long and somewhat monotonous day's journey through the mud of the Mississippi, we reached St. Louis at nine o'clock in the evening; and glad I was to exchange my floating palace for the Southern hotel, by far the finest in the United States, and, in my opinion, the best.

"I cannot part with the 'Father of Waters' without expressing an opinion that, except for purposes purely commercial, DeSoto might as well have kept his discovery to himself; but this remark will also apply to Columbus.

"Beyond having a fine position, and being very extensive, St. Louis has nothing especially to recommend it. Here all other matters seem completely eclipsed by commerce—the minds of men are wholly absorbed in it. There exists a great jealousy of Chicago, and one would think that the railway companies were bent on running one another off the road by the violence with which they compete.

"The courthouse is considered a fine building; it only struck me as large.

"The smoke of the steamers renders a walk along the 'Levee' very disagreeable and almost useless, as, in consequence of it, you can see nothing of the river.

"There is little in St. Louis itself to repay one for the trouble of visiting it; the suburbs are extensive and agreeable.

Upon the title page of his book Rose printed—

"Sir: This is a Great Country."

Chorus of Americans.

He summed up his conclusions on the American people in these words:

"An overweening self-esteem, a conceit without bounds, and a total absence of both taste and refinement, are the blots on the national character."

In the opinion of this Englishman there was impending just forty years ago an irrepressible conflict between the East and the West:

“That the Western are the coming men is admitted on all hands; and now that the South is likely to be crushed out, the coming struggle will be between East and West, and a desperate one it seems likely to be.

“Whatever lingering remains of old world chivalry and honor were to be traced in the conduct of the South, these qualities never have existed in the West, the inhabitants of which are as overbearing and self-asserting as the Yankee himself.

“Whenever these two incarnations of Self—the Western and Eastern men—shall come into collision, then will human nature be seen in its basest colors; then will avarice, envy, and hatred, ranked on both sides, meet in a deadly conflict, the horrors of which will be unmitigated by either fear of God or human respect.”

# Seers of the Valley and of the City

DeTocqueville came to this country in the thirties on a special mission of investigation for the French government. He pursued his inquiries far beyond his instructions, and returning wrote his famous "Democracy in America." DeTocqueville told the world:

"The Mississippi Valley is, upon the whole, the most magnificent dwelling place prepared by God for man's abode."

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Charles Sumner, Senator from Massachusetts, among the greatest of American Statesmen of the fifties and sixties, was of stature to look over the Alleghanies. He said:

"The Mississippi Valley speaks for itself as no man can speak."

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Wendell Phillips, of Massachusetts, after slavery had been abolished, for he was The Apostle of Abolition, wrote a letter to a St. Louisian in 1870:

"If the State of Missouri would back up St. Louis with a liberal policy, that would show in the people of the State a pride to build up a great city within their own borders, St. Louis would soon become the largest interior city on this continent and one of the great cities of the world."

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Horace Greeley, the founder of the New York Tribune, in 1870 wrote his impression of the future of St. Louis:

"I have twice seen St. Louis in the middle of winter. Nature made her the focus of a vast region, embodying a vast area of the most fertile land of the globe. Man will soon accomplish her destiny by rendering her the seat of an immense industry, the home of the far-reaching, ever-expanding commerce. Her gait is not so rapid as that of some of her Western sisters, but she advances steadily and surely to her predestined station of first inland city of the globe."



# The Prophecy of Laclede Coming True

More than a third of a century ago, in 1871, James E. Yeatman pointed out that the prophecy of Laclede was coming true:

“Laclede seems to have had a prophetic vision of the coming greatness of the city which he was locating—it at least dawned upon his mind. Could the hand of omnipotence have drawn aside the veil, so he could have had a glimpse of it, with its busy population, its crowded streets teeming with life, its miles of storehouses, its palatial residences, its foundries and furnaces, its machine shops and manufactories, its churches and schoolhouses and colleges; its waters no longer traversed by barges of a few tons burden, propelled by muscles and sinews of strong men—occupying many months in making a voyage from New Orleans to St. Louis—but by great vessels propelled by steam, carrying vast burdens and moving almost with the speed of the wind; the land traversed by numerous railroads with their long trains freighted with human beings and the rich products of every clime, arriving and departing each hour, contributing to the wealth and growth of the little trading post established by him and which he said ‘might become one of the finest cities of America’! This seemed no less probable to Mons. de Neyon and his officers at Fort de Chartres than do the predictions of those now in our midst—who tell us that St. Louis is to be not one of the greatest but the greatest city on this continent, and the capital of an empire.”

## Ben Butler's Vision of "The Very First City"

Benjamin F. Butler, general in the Union army, member of Congress, Governor of Massachusetts, was in St. Louis a few years after the war. In the course of his speech he said:

"I also remember that I am in the city of St. Louis—destined, ere long, to be the great city on the continent; the greatest central point between the East and the West, at once destined to be the entrepot and depot of all the internal commerce of the greatest and most prosperous country the world has ever seen; connected soon with India by the Pacific, and receiving the goods of China and Japan; draining, with its immense rivers centering here, the great Northwest, and opening into the Gulf, through the great river of this nation, the Father of Waters—the Mississippi. Whenever—and that time is not far distant—the internal commerce shall excel our foreign commerce, then shall St. Louis take the very first rank among the cities of the nation. And that time, my friends, is much sooner than any one of us actually realizes. Suppose that it had been told to you—any one of you here present, of middle age, within twenty years past, that within that time such a city would grow up here, with such a population as covers the teeming prairies of Illinois and Indiana, between this and the Ohio, who would have realized this prediction? And so the next quarter of a century shall see a larger population west of the Mississippi than the last quarter of a century saw east of the Mississippi and the city of St. Louis, from its central location, and through the vigor, the energy, the industry, and enterprise of its inhabitants, shall become the very first city of the United States of America, now and hereafter destined to be the great Republican nation of the world."

## St. Louis a Metropolis of Comprehensive Activities

A correspondent of the New York Times spent some weeks in the West in the early seventies making a study of cities. From St. Louis he wrote his conclusions and his reasons for them:

“No one who desires to understand the whole subject of his country’s future should fail to seek the metropolitan center of that country. The question which puzzles the people, and even the newspapers of late, is this: ‘Where is the Paris, the London, or the Jerusalem of the nation?’ I know New York has yet the clearest title to that claim, but of late St. Louis has spoken much and often in her own behalf—with what truthfulness I propose to examine. Chicago has been heard, Cincinnati puts in her voice, Philadelphia prides herself upon her strength and beauty, Boston calls herself the hub, and others put in their claims. Now, next to New York, I am disposed to regard the claim of St. Louis. Before slavery died this claim was not worth much, but that dead weight is now removed. Standing here, then, in St. Louis, an Eastern man, I cannot resist the impression that I am in the future commercial, if not political, metropolis of the land. A thousand voices conspire to enforce this impression upon the not very prophetic mind. I would make no invidious flings at the cheek of Chicago, the conceit of Boston, the cool silence of a New Yorker, as he points to a forest of masts and a million of people, the nonchalant airs of the city of Brotherly Love, and the peculiar habits of Cincinnati. Chicago has the railroads, she says. Granted. A metropolis of railroads, without a river, deep, pure and broad enough to afford drink to her present population, suggests the idea that railroads cannot make a city. Fitchburg, in Massachusetts, has more railroads than any New England town. What does that bring her, save the name of being Fitchburg? Shipping alone, which you have in New York, cannot make a city. Philadelphia may keep on annexing every town in Pennsylvania, and Jersey, too, and that cannot make a metropolis. The pork trade flourishes in Cincinnati, but even so respectable a constituency as a gentlemanly porker,

who loves luxury, lives on the fat of the land, and is otherwise excessively aristocratic, cannot make a metropolis. In fact no great cosmopolitan center can be made out of one specialty. Manchester is greater than London, in its specialty, but Manchester's specialty must always keep it constrained, and prevent its ever becoming a center. Cologne, with 'seventy-nine well-defined, distinct, and separate' perfumes, has made it the city of odors, but Cologne can never be a capital. Shoes make and kill Lynn at once. Chicago is a depot for speculators in grain, and Cincinnati abounds in hogs, but this is the end of their glory. New York and St. Louis are alike in this: You will find every specialty in about equal proportion. St. Louis needs only one thing to make it to the West what New York is to the East—railroads. She is not even an inland city. Light-draft sailing vessels can sail from St. Louis to London. All that she further needs is age. Up to 1866, capital was slow to venture and settle down in this city. Save a few thrifty Germans, the population was southern. This was her condition up to this time, so that she is practically, a city of only ten years' growth."

# A Philosophical View of St. Louis People

A philosophical view of the composite population of St. Louis and its surrounding territory, was presented in 1875 by Judge Nathaniel Holmes:

"It is the remarkable fact that the several successive streams of westward migration of the white Aryan race from the primitive Paradise, in the neighborhood of the primeval cities of Sogd and Balkh, in high Asia, long separated in times of migration, and for the most part distinct in the European areas finally occupied by them, and which, in the course of its grand march of twenty thousand years or more, has created nearly the whole of the civilization, arts, sciences and literature of this globe, buildings seats of fixed habitation and great cities, successively, in the rich valleys of the Ganges, the Tiber and the Po, the Danube, the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Seine and Thames, wandering children of the same great family are now, in these latter times, brought together again in their descendants and representatives, Semitic, Pelasgic, Celtic, Teutonic and Slavonic, here in the newly discovered common land of promise, and are commingled (especially in this great Valley of the Mississippi), into one common brotherhood of race, language, law and liberty."

# The Moral Fibre of St. Louisans

L. U. Reavis wrote much about St. Louis and St. Louisans. One of the most noteworthy productions of his pen was his tribute in 1881 to the moral fibre of the population, tracing its evolution from the days of the fur trapper:

“An allusion to an incident in the history of the city may be permitted which illustrates the texture of those elements of character derived from the crude looms of the early settlers of the trappers’ village. In 1849 St. Louis was visited with the triple furies of fire, flood and pestilence. The best portions of her business locations were reduced to ashes; five thousand of her people died with a disease that bid defiance to medical skill; her rivers rose and flooded her productive bottom lands. Ruin stalked through her streets and pervaded the country tributary to her commercial support. At this trying moment, with that self-reliant and indomitable will, which carried her founders safely through the ordeals to which they were exposed, she met the responsibilities of the trial with an independent spirit, a prowess of resistance and recuperative energies of the highest type. Honorable as it is to our nature that sympathy finds a lodgment not alone in individual bosoms, but in communities and nations, our citizens asked no aid from this benevolent feeling to meet the exigencies of the hour. Not a dollar was received or asked from contiguous or distant cities. The bravery and self-reliant characteristics of the trapper shone out in the artisan, merchant and professional man of the present, and an immediate effort was put in requisition to redeem losses and repair devastations. Such an exhibition of unconquerable will, of inherent strength, is surely a forcible prognostic, a grand prophecy of the ultimate destiny of our beloved metropolis.”

# How the Population of St. Louis Was Formed

Scharff, an Eastern author of standing as a historian, twenty-five years ago pointed out in a striking manner the convergence of the early explorations and of the later migrations in the vicinity of St. Louis:

“The French who went west from Quebec to Lake Superior, those who descended the Wabash, the Illinois, the Kaskaskia and the Mississippi, and those who ascended the latter stream from the Balize, all met and settled within forty or fifty miles of the city whose history we are writing, and the oldest settlement, Cahokia, is within sight of its tallest spires. So likewise the three chief lines of English settlement from New England across western New York to the lakes, from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia westward to the Ohio, and from Virginia, and the Carolinas to Tennessee and Kentucky, all converged at St. Louis. It is rather more than a coincidence that Coronado and DeSoto, the one starting on the Pacific coast and the other on the Atlantic, would actually have crossed paths if they had projected their outward marches two hundred miles farther, and their meeting point would have been very near the site of St. Louis. It is rather more of a coincidence, likewise, that the road of the trading pack and wagon of the New England emigrant, the path of the Virginia ranger and Kentucky hunter, the devious way of the Canadian *coureur des bois* and *voyageur* and the route of the trapper should, all of them, have led to St. Louis. In the ante-chamber of the representative of the French ancient regime, or the Spanish *hidalgo* who might chance to be ‘commandant’ at old St. Louis, but in no other place on this continent, it would have been natural for Daniel Boone, ‘backwoodsman of Kentucky,’ to meet and exchange adventures with the Yankee peddler from Connecticut, the Jesuit priest from Minnesota, the Canadian half-breed trapper from the head waters of the Missouri, and the sugar planter of Opelousas and Terrebonne.

“So races and nationalities confront one another today in St. Louis, and so likewise, in the remotest past of America’s connection with historic periods, we find that con-



vergence of races and nationalities toward the central point of the great Mississippi basin, which was to eventuate in the founding of St. Louis and its establishment as the key-city of the mightiest river system upon the globe."



# The Review of Improvements in 1881

It is not uninteresting to read what St. Louisans of 1881 considered worthy of local pride. The Review of Improvements published that year summed up the progress of the city:

“Since 1875, notwithstanding the period of depression, and the slow revival of prosperity, there has been a considerable amount of building every year, and this year it is unusually large. Among the larger erections to be noted are the Union Depot and the new Pacific railroad depot on Seventh street, at least three grain elevators, two large tobacco manufactories, two cotton compress warehouses and a stately Cotton Exchange, a Real Estate Exchange, a Bessemer steel works, and the South St. Louis iron furnaces set in blast again, a new barge line to New Orleans capable of carrying 10,000 tons of freight at one haul and in five days’ time, the Southern hotel rebuilt (fireproof), and the Planters House remodelled and raised two stories, one large theatre built, another building, and a third in progress to be hatched and born, several new churches, the Smith Academy, the Harrison manual training school, and the Crow Museum of Art added to Washington University, the new United States custom house and post office nearing completion and a United States assay office and mint provided for; and the Jefferson avenue bridge built; the parks have been improved, and a new street railroad chartered to Benton park and South St. Louis, and sundry elevated railroads are in the air. The street railroads have been greatly extended, numerous palatial blocks of mercantile houses have been erected on Fifth, Sixth and Olive streets, Washington avenue and elsewhere, at once an ornament to the city and a witness of its unchecked progress. Looking at the changes on Washington avenue, in the last five years, one who remembers back to the time when Main street was the ladies’ promenade, and ‘Quality Row’ extended on Chestnut street from Main to Second, or when Market street became the fashionable walk, until after the great fire of 1849 it was transferred to Fourth street, may venture to predict that

the Broadway of St. Louis will soon stretch westward from Fourth to the University on the hill, if indeed it should ever stop or shift again short of Grand avenue or the King's Highway."

# The Cosmopolitan Air of St. Louis

Julian Ralph, in Harper's Monthly, 1892, attributed to St. Louis the distinctive trait of cosmopolitan character:

"St. Louis is the one large Western city in which a man from our Eastern cities would feel at once at home. It seems to require no more explanation than Boston would to a New Yorker, or Baltimore to a Bostonian. It speaks for itself in a familiar language of street scenes, architecture, and the faces and manners of the people. In saying this I make no comparison that is unfavorable to the other Western cities, for it is not unfriendly to say that their most striking characteristic is their newness, or that this is lacking in St. Louis."

# McKinley, Reed and Rothschild on St. Louis

When he was Governor of Ohio, in 1894, William McKinley visited the city. The country was slowly recovering from the depression of 1893. St. Louis had given other cities one more evidence of her marvelous power of recuperation:

"I congratulate your city on the splendid way in which she met the financial reverses of last year. Resting as they do upon conservative principles and business integrity, your mercantile and financial institutions have survived as those of few of our cities did."

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The same year, 1894, Thomas B. Reed, Speaker of the House of Representatives, addressed a meeting in the Merchants Exchange:

"I suppose it is superfluous for me to tell you about the great resources of St. Louis, about its being the biggest tobacco market and a great shoe manufactory and your splendid horse car railroads. I am afraid you have got that already printed in books of your own. But I will say, and my conscience will permit me to say it, that you have got not only a big city, but a stately and noble city, in which you have every right to be proud."

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Baron Rothschild, in 1895, discussed the most attractive fields for investment of European capital. He addressed a letter on the subject to a high official of Great Britain. In this letter he defined three great opportunities as he saw them at that time:

"The third region of wealth production is around St. Louis. The soil of all the surrounding States, the coal fields of Illinois and Missouri, the iron and other minerals of Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma, the great forest wealth and the great waterways are the principal factors."

# The Suburban Beauties of St. Louis

In the National Magazine, Edmund S. Hoch, dwelt upon the very attractive suburbs of the city, suggesting the existence of natural conditions which the average St. Louisan seldom takes into account:

"You may get on a car in the throbbing heart of St. Louis and ride twenty miles straight, and far out and away from the noise and bustle of the city. This by almost a dozen different lines, in as many separate directions. Out to lakes, rivers, country places and clubs, suburban resorts, etc.; through the rich, fresh, real country! And such a country! Those who have never seen Missouri, who have ridden in trolley cars over the flats from Buffalo to Niagara, from New York to Coney Island or from Chicago to Waukegan or Joliet, know nothing of what it means to speed through the country about St. Louis, over the various splendid electric routes which radiate there. Across the rich, high ridges, the fresh, airy cars of these lines whirl you, into the fertile valleys, by field and stream, orchard and vineyard, farmyard and meadow—through thickest forest and across deep ravine. Swiftly and far you glide, an occasional glimpse of church steeples and villages rising in the hills, while long vistas of blue, misty ridges hover close under the horizon far in the distance; the fresh breath of the countryside—the rich, sweet, dew-steeped countryside—in your nostrils, and constantly fanning your cheek!

"What an asset such country lines and rides are to a city! What a godsend to the poor! What a delight, what wealth for every citizen! The trips out of Washington to Cabin John Bridge, and through upper New York to Fort George, remind me a little of these St. Louis country journeys, but only a very little. If this western city were possessed of no other attraction, such direct connection with the woods, with field, orchard and meadow, lake and stream, must appeal strongly to every wholesome, healthy man."

## Chauncey M. Depew on Change in 1896

Chauncey M. Depew, Senator from New York and head of the New York delegation in the convention which nominated McKinley at St. Louis in 1896, spoke to business men on 'change. What he said about the theory of city government of St. Louis was especially interesting:

"I am delighted to meet with you here in St. Louis. It is many years since I had the pleasure of meeting you on a public occasion. I am delighted to find in studying your local affairs that you have the best city government according to an authority on that subject, Dr. Shaw, that there is anywhere in the United States. That city government has come from having devolved upon your best citizens the formation of a charter for themselves. It solves the problem of municipal government that leaves the people of any locality to themselves, and intelligence and integrity will govern that municipality.

In the people of St. Louis Senator Depew found the perfected type of Americanism:

"I count it a fortunate event that the Republican National Convention is held in the city of St. Louis. It is fortunate that this party organized on lines which thirty-five years ago were so full of passionate resentment is holding its quadrennial meeting for the nomination of its candidates and for the enunciation of its principles in the principal city of what was formerly a slave State, of what was formerly a border State, in the midst of a territory, where a generation before the people were at each other's throats upon the existence of the Union. It demonstrates as nothing else could to the country and to the world that the United States are now one nation and one people."

The Senator from New York, cosmopolitan that he was, noted what so many other visitors to St. Louis have commented upon, the existence of a spirit of hospitality with no false ring in it:

"No community ever did so much to make the visiting delegations of the country happy and comfortable. There has been no politics in this reception. You simply wanted to know the men without regard to politics all over the country, and that they should know you. No host ever did so much for guests as you have done."

# Senator Tillman in the Heart of the Country

During the campaign year of 1896, Senator Benjamin R. Tillman, of South Carolina, was in St. Louis. Aggressive of speech, tenacious of his record as a commoner, the Senator, in a brief speech to the Merchants Exchange, said some good and true things of St. Louis:

"On this tour I have flown around the circle. I have gone over the western rim. I have seen the Rocky Mountains. I have traveled over part of the Great American Desert. I have looked at the great farm lands of Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri. And today I can understand more readily than ever before why you people want to remove the capital of the country to St. Louis. You are in the heart of the country and if we were starting afresh in housekeeping I expect you would put up a pretty good fight to move Uncle Sam over here.

"Your magnificent river flowing southward gives you advantages in a commercial way that few cities have. Here at the junction of three great rivers—the Mississippi, the Missouri and practically the Ohio, you are given facilities in competition with the railroads which make your freight rates more reasonable than they would be otherwise.

"I had the pleasure of driving over your city yesterday and notwithstanding the hard times upon which I am to talk tonight I saw a great many evidences of wealth and progress. The number of buildings going up rapidly in all parts of the city indicate that some of you have not got any hard times, no matter how the balance of us are."

## The Vice-President of Mexico Offers Reciprocity

Ignacio Mariscal, Vice-President of Mexico in 1899, at the time of his visit to St. Louis in 1899, courted the closest possible relations between his country and this city:

“The city of St. Louis, in the United States, is one of the most enterprising, and is destined to be, in the near future, one of the most important for our country. It is not only the nearest of the great centers of trade and industry, but its wonderful enterprise compares favorably with any city of the world. You have shown the greatest interest for the promotion of commerce with our country. You had a chamber of commerce especially to promote trade with us. And now you have a Latin-American club more particularly destined to carry out that purpose.

“All these efforts deserve to be crowned with success and undoubtedly will be. We Mexicans will reciprocate and the intercourse between the two people will serve not only for the purpose of a better knowledge of the people for each other but to dispel any prejudice which might prevail to the detriment of our better understanding. The two republics of North America without any political connection will act as two sisters, two intimate friends, two natural allies.”



## Roosevelt, David B. Hill and Count Apponyi

Theodore Roosevelt, in the campaign of 1900, when he was a candidate for Vice-President, visited St. Louis. In his own original way he spoke to the business men on 'change of the impression the city made upon him:

"There is always one feature that is peculiarly presented to me coming to a city like St. Louis, which has in it among its citizens so many of the men who wore the blue and of those who wore the gray, and of their sons."

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David Bennett Hill, former Governor of New York, stopped here when he came out to attend the Democratic convention at Kansas City, in 1900. He gave the Merchants Exchange the impression St. Louis made upon him:

"This is my first visit to St. Louis, and as I was driven through your streets I was surprised by the largeness of this western country, your beautiful streets, great Union Station, parks, residences, hotels, and business buildings. Everything is on a grand scale.

"I am grateful that I am permitted to meet the business men of St. Louis face to face as I greatly admire your energy, enterprise and conservatism. Upon your faithfulness, loyalty and conservatism much depends for the future progress, prosperity and perpetuation of the grand institutions of our country."

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Count von Apponyi, a deputy of Hungary, was one of the vice-presidents of the Peace Congress held in St. Louis during the World's Fair. An assertion which he made to the committee of the Business Men's League, while being escorted about the city, seemed almost extravagant. It was the subject of inquiry afterwards and was sustained by others who have traveled widely:

"You have more beautiful residences in the aggregate in St. Louis than all of the handsome residences in Continental Europe."

# Number and Beauty of St. Louis Homes

The National Magazine, of 1903, gave St. Louis the first place among American cities for the beauty of its homes:

"It is a fact that St. Louis has more beautiful homes than any city in the world; I may say, further, and the fact may be proved, that St. Louis has more beautiful homes than any two cities in the world; indeed, any three cities might be selected and introduced into the comparison, and St. Louis would, I believe, meet and surpass them all in the competition. Many of these homes are palaces—scores of them are, in fact—veritable palaces in every particular of richness, appointment and setting—even in size.

"The populations of New York and Chicago have, and can have, no conception of the richness and beauty of the Missouri metropolis' homes, for they have nothing at hand with which to make a comparison.

"In St. Louis, for blocks and blocks, the eye is met with splendid mansions set in spacious grounds—each a complete and satisfying entity—each surrounded by stretching green lawns, fresh and sparkling under the industrious hose, diversified and enriched by luxuriant shrubs, flowers and trees. The continuation of such a neighborhood for miles creates an atmosphere, a setting for a mansion—for each mansion in such a section—that cannot possibly attach to an isolated house and grounds, found set between a vacant, desolate block on one side, and a solid row of frowning, irregularly placed houses on the other. St. Louis has planned for its homes—especially its palace homes—planned with a result in effect that is marvelous—that is inconceivable by those who live away from that city."

# An English Engineer at the World's Fair

Emerson Bainbridge, an eminent engineer of Great Britain, visited the United States in 1904. He spent some time in St. Louis. He investigated business methods as well as conditions. He looked into the industries of St. Louis. Upon his return to England, Bainbridge published his "Notes," and put upon the title page, "for private circulation." Some portion of his stay in St. Louis, the engineer gave to the Exposition, of which he wrote "it is impossible to speak too highly." He added this comment: "To the ordinary observer, one of the most striking things in the St. Louis World's Fair is the good order observed by everybody." After giving in considerable detail the result of his investigation of business methods in St. Louis, Mr. Bainbridge adds this "Note:"

"In looking for reasons for the quick manner in which the United States build up successful enterprises, one cannot overlook one element of vitality which appears to constitute a very important factor, viz., the manner in which the young women of the lower middle and working classes give their lives to business work. For instance, there is no comparison between the appearance of English cities at midday, and that of a city like St. Louis. In the neighborhood of the banks and brokers' offices, the streets are filled with many hundreds of trim, neatly dressed, superior looking young women, all with an air of business, either going to or from their lunch or their business houses. There is no doubt that this class is doing much more active commercial work in America than in Great Britain."

## Ambassador Bryce and James J. Hill in Prophecies

James Bryce, the author of "The American Commonwealth," and the British Ambassador to the United States, returning in 1907 from a tour of the Southwest, spoke to the Commercial Club of St. Louis the conclusion his mind had reached:

"St. Louis is the natural center of the vast fertile territory of the Southwest, and with her natural advantages must inevitably become the most important metropolis of this country."

In November, 1907, James J. Hill, the great railroad builder of the Northwest, gave out in New York City this expression of present needs and this forecast of future development:

"New York has reached the climax of her commercial supremacy. No city can maintain its control when its chief claim is that it is the dearest place in which to do business. The cost of everything relating to trade and commerce has increased here beyond the point of profit. Traffic will be forced to seek other outlets; business other locations. To many points of the West, St. Louis is as convenient and as easily reached as Chicago. From there to New Orleans is the Mississippi. Down the river now they float flatboats, unwieldy, awkward and inadequate. You see steamers convoying tows of these old-time 'broadhorns' carrying cargoes too small to be profitable. Can you imagine the effect of fleets of modern steel barges carrying thousands of bushels of grain running down a fourteen-foot channel to the Mississippi?

"The internal growth of the United States in population, in manufactures, in agricultural products is unparalleled. In twenty-five years, in the country west of the Mississippi, an immense nation has sprung into existence, a dozen States have been added to the Union. It has yielded each year an immense addition to the country's wealth. Yet in that same length of time, how many new trunk lines of railroad have been built between the Mississippi and the Atlantic? A number of little local lines you may name, but not one main artery of traffic is there which did not exist twenty-five years ago."

# One Hundred Years— St. Louis, by Wm. V. Byars

What constitutes the city? More than population; more than commerce; more than wealth; more than intelligence and refinement. The building of St. Louis is praiseworthy and gratifying. The lifting of St. Louis by St. Louisans is the higher destiny. In his "One Hundred Years—St. Louis," William Vincent Byars wrote:

"A flag was raised as a flag slipped lower  
In the village street in the sight of the stream,  
While a century passed, like a dim, vast dream  
When the rising sun still lacks the power  
To rouse the sleeper who stirs at the gleam  
Of the first straight ray as it quickens and thrills  
His sleep with the life of the morning hour  
Ere the ghosts of the darkness, which mutter and peep  
In the soul of a man or a world asleep,  
Fall back to the void where they gibber and cower  
Lest light should pierce them with might that kills.

"A flag slipped low with a sound of sighing  
That sobbed from the souls of the lovers of Spain,  
For a dream of the night that was dreamed in vain,  
For a century lost, for an empire dying,  
As a new day yawned with a new flag flying  
And a new hope born as the old hope passed  
To the limbo, made for the hopes whose lying,  
That filled a world of oppression with tears,  
Is spurned by the feet of the new-born years  
Till it falls in the bottomless pit whose crying  
Proclaims that justice is done at last!

"We have felt the earth as it reeled, sore-shaken;  
We have seen waste fields where our blood ran red;  
We have looked on the land as it wailed for its dead;  
We have grieved for a hope that, if once forsaken,  
Gave the world to judgment with all hope sped;  
Yet we clave to the hope though we paid the cost,  
And we stand today with a fresh strength taken;  
With the flag for judgment on things to be,  
With a threat in each star that if our decree  
Cheats the earth of the hope that its red stripes waken  
And we turn backward, the world is lost."

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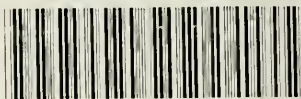








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